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Complete Listing of the Claims:

1-8 (Cancelled)

9. (Previously presented) In a method of automatically hybridizing a polynucleotide probe composition to at least one target on a solid substrate, said method executed in an automated staining system having evaporation inhibitor liquid covering a polynucleotide hybridization buffer-covered target on said slide, the improvement comprising the step of

automatically hybridizing said target with said polynucleotide probe composition in the presence of low molecular weight dextran sulfate having a molecular weight range from about 8,000 to about 16,000 daltons, wherein said polynucleotide probe composition contains at least one sequence complementary to a coding region of said target.

10. (original) The method of claim 9 wherein said polynucleotide probe composition is selected from the group consisting of DNA probes and RNA probes.

11. (original) The method of claim 9 wherein said tissue section is a paraffin-embedded tissue section.

12. (original) The method of claim 9 wherein said tissue section is a fresh-frozen tissue section.

13. (original) The method of claim 9 wherein said polynucleotide probe composition is labeled with a detectable label.

14. (original) The method of claim 9 wherein said label is selected from the group consisting essentially of fluorophores, haptens and chromogens.

15-17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9 wherein said probe composition is arrayed on said solid substrate.

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9 wherein said dextran sulfate has an average molecular weight of about 13,000.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9 wherein said low molecular weight dextran sulfate concentration ranges from about 5% to about 25%, wt./vol.

21. (Canceled)